

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Withdrawn) A composition comprising at least 0.1 wt.% of granules suitable for use in foodstuffs, said granules having an average diameter in the range of 30-3000 μm and comprising:

- a. 3-70 wt.% of a plurality of non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 3-300 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants, acidulants, hydrocolloids, micro-organisms, flavours and combinations thereof;
- b. 10-80 wt.% of a discrete continuous phase containing at least 90 wt.% lipids, which continuous phase envelops the non-lipophilic particles and holds them together, the combination of non-lipophilic particles and the continuous phase forming an agglomerate with a mean diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ; and
- c. 10-80 wt.% of an exterior lipophilic layer that encompasses the agglomerate, which lipophilic layer exhibits a slip melting point of at least 30°C.

23. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 2, wherein the average diameter of the granules is in the range of 40-290 μm , said granules comprising:

50-90 wt.% of the agglomerate, said agglomerate having a mean diameter in the range of 30-200 μm and containing:

i. 10-70 wt.% of a plurality of the non-lipophilic particles, said non-lipophilic particles having an average diameter in the range of 10-150 μm ; and

ii. 30-90 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase, said discrete continuous phase exhibiting a slip melting point of at least 30°C; and

10-50 wt.% of the exterior lipid layer, wherein the slip melting point of said exterior lipid layer does not exceed the slip melting point of the discrete continuous phase by more than 5°C.

24. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the plurality of non-lipophilic particles represent between 10 and 40 wt.%.

25. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the non-lipophilic particles contain between 0.01 and 5 wt.% of enzyme.

26. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the non-lipophilic particles contain at least 30 wt.% of hydrocolloid, flour, gluten, salt, sugar or a mixture thereof.

27. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the agglomerate contains 25-60 wt.% of the plurality of non-lipophilic particles and 75-40 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase.

28. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the granules contain 15-30 wt.% of the exterior lipid layer.

29. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the exterior lipid layer has a thickness in the range of 6-25 μm .

30. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the exterior lipid layer exhibits a melting point of 30-50°C.

31. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the lipids in the discrete continuous phase are selected from the group consisting of triglycerides, diglycerides, monoglycerides, phospholipids, datems, lactems, citrems, acetems, stearyl-lactylates, polyglycerol esters, sucrose esters of fatty acids, fatty acids, waxes, soaps and combinations thereof.

32. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the functional food ingredient is selected from the group consisting of enzymes, oxidoreductants, acidulants, micro-organisms, flavours and combinations thereof.

33. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the exterior lipophilic layer contains at least 80 wt.% lipids selected from the group consisting of triglycerides, diglycerides, monoglycerides, phospholipids, datems, lactems, citrems, acetems, stearyl-lactylates, polyglycerol esters, sucrose esters, fatty acids, waxes, soaps and combinations thereof.

34. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, said granules containing:

10-60 wt.% of the plurality of non-lipophilic particles;

15-40 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase; and

15-60 wt.% of the exterior lipophilic layer.

35. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the melting point of the exterior layer does not exceed the melting point of the discrete continuous phase.

36. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 22, wherein the composition contains at least 10 wt.% of the granules.

37. (Currently amended) *A method of preparing a dough or a batter, said method comprising adding a bread improver composition, said bread improver composition comprising at least 0.1 wt.% of granules suitable for use in foodstuffs and one or more particulate bread improving ingredients selected from the group consisting of emulsifiers, oxidoreductants, acidulants, salt, sugars, flour, yeast, protein, dairy ingredients and fat; said granules and the bread improving ingredients together constituting at least 60% of the bread improver composition by weight of dry matter, said granules having an average diameter in the range of 40-290 μm and comprising:*

- a. 10-60 wt.% of a plurality of non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 3-150 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants, acidulants, hydrocolloids, micro-organisms, flavours and combinations thereof;*
- b. 15-40 wt.% of a discrete continuous phase containing at least 90 wt.% lipids, which continuous phase envelops the non-lipophilic particles and holds them together, the combination of non-lipophilic particles and the continuous phase forming an agglomerate with a diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ; and*
- c. 10-50 wt.% of an exterior lipophilic layer that encompasses the agglomerate, which lipophilic layer exhibits a slip melting point of at least 30°C;*

wherein the agglomerate of non-lipophilic particles and discrete continuous phase represents 50-90 wt.% of the granules and wherein the agglomerate contains 10-70 wt.% of the plurality of the non-lipophilic particles and 30-90 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase.

38. (Previously presented) A dough or a batter comprising between 0.01 and 5 wt.% of the granules as defined in claim 37.

39. (Currently amended) *A method of manufacturing a composition comprising at least 1 wt.% of granules suitable for use in foodstuffs, said granules having an average diameter in the range of 40-290 μm and comprising:*

- a. 10-70 wt.% of a plurality of non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 10-150 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants, acidulants, hydrocolloids, micro-organisms, flavours and combinations thereof;*
- b. 10-80 wt.% of a discrete continuous phase containing at least 90 wt.% lipids, which continuous phase envelops the non-lipophilic particles and*

~~holds them together, the combination of non-lipophilic particles and the continuous phase forming an agglomerate with a mean diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ; and~~

- ~~e. 10-50 wt.% of an exterior lipophilic layer that encompasses the agglomerate, which lipophilic layer exhibits a slip melting point of at least 30°C, wherein the slip melting point of said exterior lipid layer does not exceed the slip melting point of the discrete continuous phase by more than 5°C;~~

~~wherein the agglomerate represents 50-90 wt.% of the granules and contains:~~

- ~~i. 10-70 wt.% of a plurality of the non-lipophilic particles; and
ii. 30-90 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase; as defined in claim 37;~~

~~said method of manufacturing comprising:~~

- ~~a. providing non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 10-150 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants and combinations thereof;~~
~~b. combining said non-lipophilic particles with a first molten lipid material with a melting point of 30-45°C in a weight ratio of 1:9 to 7:3, followed by mixing so as to obtain a homogeneous dispersion of the non-lipophilic particles in the molten lipid material,~~
~~c. converting the homogenous dispersion into agglomerates in which a plurality of the non-lipophilic particles is enveloped by a discrete continuous lipid phase, said agglomerates exhibiting an average diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ;~~
~~d. coating said agglomerates with a second molten lipid material with a melting point of at least 30°C so as to produce coated agglomerates that are fully encompassed by an exterior lipid layer, wherein the melting point of said exterior lipophilic layer does not exceed the melting point of the discrete continuous lipid phase by more than 5°C;~~
~~e. cooling the coated agglomerates to ambient temperature or lower; and collecting the coated agglomerates to obtain the granulate. A method of manufacturing~~

a composition comprising at least 1 wt.% of granules suitable for use in foodstuffs, said granules having an average diameter in the range of 40-290 μm and comprising:

(a) 10-70 wt.% of a plurality of non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 10-150 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants, acidulants, hydrocolloids, micro-organisms, flavours and combinations thereof.

(b) 10-80 wt.% of a discrete continuous phase containing at least 90 wt.% lipids, which continuous phase envelops the non-lipophilic particles and holds them together, the combination of non-lipophilic particles and the continuous

phase forming an agglomerate with a mean diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ; and

(c) 10-50 wt.% of an exterior lipophilic layer that encompasses the agglomerate, which lipophilic layer exhibits a slip melting point of at least 30°C, wherein the slip melting point of said exterior lipid layer does not exceed the slip melting point of the discrete continuous phase by more than 5°C;
wherein the agglomerate represents 50-90 wt.% of the granules and contains:

iii. 10-70 wt.% of a plurality of the non-lipophilic particles; and

iv. 30-90 wt.% of the discrete continuous phase;
according to claim 23, said method of manufacturing comprising:

- e. providing non-lipophilic particles with an average diameter in the range of 10-150 μm , said particles containing at least 10 wt.% of one or more food components selected from the group of carbohydrates, proteins, salt and functional food ingredients and at least 0.1 wt.% of one or more functional food ingredients, said functional food ingredients being selected from the group of enzymes, oxidoreductants, ~~acidulants, hydrocolloids, micro-organisms, flavours~~ and combinations thereof;
- f. combining said non-lipophilic particles with a first molten lipid material with a melting point of 30-45°C in a weight ratio of 1:9 to 7:3, followed by mixing so as to obtain a homogeneous dispersion of the non-lipophilic particles in the molten lipid material,
- g. converting the homogenous dispersion into agglomerates in which a plurality of the non-lipophilic particles is enveloped by a discrete continuous lipid phase, said agglomerates exhibiting an average diameter in the range of 30-200 μm ;
- h. coating said agglomerates with a second molten lipid material with a melting point of at least 30°C so as to produce coated agglomerates that are fully encompassed by an exterior lipid layer wherein the melting point of said exterior lipophilic layer does not exceed the melting point of the discrete continuous lipid phase by more than 5°C;
- i. cooling the coated agglomerates to ambient temperature or lower; and
- j. collecting the coated agglomerates to obtain the granulate.

40. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 39, wherein the homogeneous dispersion is converted into agglomerates by means of spray chilling or extrusion.

41. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 39, wherein the coating step d. employs fluidised bed coating or rotating drum coating.